



# City of Dodge City

806 N. Second Ave.  
P.O. Box 880  
Dodge City, KS 67801

Phone: 620-225-8100  
FAX: 620-225-8144  
[www.dodgecity.org](http://www.dodgecity.org)

---

Testimony to the  
United States Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry  
Mrs. Cherise Tieben, City Manager, Dodge City, Kansas  
February 23, 2017  
Manhattan, Kansas

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, welcome to Kansas. I am Cherise Tieben, City Manager of Dodge City, Kansas, the proud home community of Senator Pat Roberts. Thank you for allowing my testimony about a rural housing challenge with a positive outcome.

In 2008, Dodge City community leaders recognized, the lack of quality affordable housing and the resulting impediment to recruiting, retaining and expanding the local workforce. At the time, the local housing supply was limited, including an inadequate stock of affordable and moderate housing available for purchase by first-time homebuyers. In the preceding five years, only 64 newly constructed residential homes had been built.

Local stakeholders saw the need for a housing assessment which was subsequently commenced to evaluate the existing housing stock and quantify the long-range housing demand for our community. There were many inputs to the study including, evaluation of current federal, state and local government policies and incentives. The results of the housing study were beneficial and identified several obstacles while also projecting a need to build 568 single family homes and 379 multi-family homes, in varying price ranges in the following 5 years.

The housing assessment highlighted the serious lack of inventory of starter homes for first-time homebuyers. And, banking regulations were tightening, making it more difficult for first-time home buyers to qualify for a conventional residential home loan. Young families and people moving into the community needing to utilize USDA RD loans to purchase affordable to moderate market range homes were encouraged to buy or build outside of Dodge City due to the population restrictions of the loan program.

The City of Dodge City and three other southwest Kansas communities brought to the attention of Senator Roberts, the stifling impact of the USDA RD loans population limit. Senator Roberts saw the need for an upward adjustment to the population limit and led the effort for a change, which became effective in May, 2014. The impact is measurable - 94 USDA guaranteed loans, totaling \$9.9 million dollars have been underwritten. The other southwest Kansas communities also share a similar success. The positive results allow the retention of existing businesses, the ability of existing businesses to grow and improves opportunities to recruit new business to our community.

Again, Senator Roberts thank you for being our champion on this and so many other issues. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am pleased to answer any questions.